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HOMEBLANKERS' CHAT

THURSDAY, JULY 25, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "JAM SESSIONS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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You've heard a lot about the jam sessions of jitterbugs and swing orchestras in recent years. But the biggest jam session of them all has nothing to do with swing or jitter. It's the jam session now being celebrated by thousands of thrifty housewives in thousands of home kitchens. Instead of drums and saxophones, the instruments for this big yearly jam session are: pans and colanders; preserving kettles; scales for weighing fruit and sugar; cups for measuring; long-handled spoons; and glass jars.

Jam is probably the easiest to make of all the fruit-and-sugar products put up in home kitchens. It's often economical, too, because you can use fruits not so good for preserves, jelly, and marmalade. Jelly, you know -- delicate, quivering, sparkling fruit jelly requires so much care and skill in making, it's one of the fine arts of cookery. Fruit preserves need a good deal of care in making, too, for the fruit in preserves must hold its shape in a clear translucent sirup. As for marmalade, it must be jelly with pieces of fruit and peel suspended in it. But jam is easy -- just crushed fruit cooked with sugar until it becomes a thick even mixture with the flavor and color of the ripe fruit.

You can make jam of the softer riper fruits that have the full ripe fruit flavor. Ideal for jam is almost any kind of berry that is well-ripened but sound, or any soft-fleshed fruits like peaches, apricots, or plums.

The trick in making jam is to cook the fruit and sugar rapidly enough to keep the natural bright color and flavor of the fruit yet not scorch the bottom of

the kettle as the jam cooks thick. Keep your long-handled spoon busy stirring the jam continually as it cooks. You can use an asbestos mat under the kettle as an extra precaution against scorching if you are cooking over a wood fire, or over a kerosene or gas stove. A wide shallow kettle is best for jam-making because the jam cooks down in it quickly.

Did you notice scales for weighing fruit and sugar in that list of utensils for jam-making? Scales are important for good results. Measurements by weight give the proportions accurately. The rule for good jam is: three-fourths to one part by weight of sugar to one part by weight of prepared fruit. For example, in making blackberry or currant jam, use one pound of sugar to one pound of berries. But in making jam of a sweeter fruit like ripe apricots or peaches use only three-fourths pound of sugar to each pound of prepared fruit. These sweet fruits may make better jam if you add two tablespoons of lemon juice to every pound of prepared fruit. This is true of apricots especially.

A couple of other points about jam are worth noting. Most jam is cooked enough when it is thick enough to spread or has reached a jelly-like consistency. When jam is done, pour it hot into hot sterilized jars and seal it. Jelly glasses with paraffin as a seal are not satisfactory for jam.

Another point: Some of the most delicious jam is made of a mixture of fruits. Almost any combination of berries makes good jam -- black and red raspberries together; or currants and red raspberries. In New England a favorite jam is made of half blueberries and half red raspberries. New York State claims a jam known as "big four" which combines equal weights of cherries, gooseberries, raspberries, and currants. Use two-thirds as much sugar as fruit for this "big four" jam.

In the Northwest good cooks make delicious jam of the wild blackberries that grow so plentifully there. Very often they make a seedless blackberry jam.



Cooking with sugar hardens seeds. So first they boil the berries a few minutes; then they press the berries through a sieve. After that they measure the soft fruit pulp, mix it with sugar and boil it down rapidly to a jelly-like consistency.

Plums make handsome and delicious jam, especially the tart danson plums that make a rich sparkling red jam. You make plum jam by a slightly different method from berry jam. Wash the plums. Weigh them. Allow three-fourths pound of sugar and one cup of water for each pound of plums. Now boil the plums in the water 10 to 15 minutes to loosen and soften the skins. Add the sugar. Keep stirring until the jam is somewhat thick. Pour the hot jam into hot sterilized jars and seal.

But there. I've wandered away from those jam combinations I started to tell you about. Currant and red raspberry is one excellent blend for color and flavor. Cherry, gooseberry, raspberry and currant is the New York State "big four". Peach and orange is another good mixture. Then, there's red raspberry and cherry. And pear and apple. Pear, lemon, and preserved ginger is a favorite medley. And try fresh or dried apricots with lemon and apple. Finally, if you should have a tree that bears old-fashioned sweet apples, here's an old-fashioned jam combination: Sweet apples, quince, and cranberry.

Once you swing into your own jam session, you'll find plenty of good combinations of your own. But if you'd like directions for jam making from the Department of Agriculture, you have only to write and ask for them. Send a postcard to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1800, called "Homemade Jellies, Jams, and Preserves."

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